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Message Text

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13
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 EB-03 SP-02 NSC-05

NSCE-00 CPR-01 L-01 PRS-01 PM-03 DODE-00 EUR-08 SCA-01

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R 071400Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1237
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1150

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS CG
SUBJECT: PRIVATE CRTICISM OF MOBUTU

REF: KINSHASA 518

1. SEVERAL EMBASSY OFFICERS AND ONE AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN HAVE HEARD OVER LAST FEW WEEKS BITTER CRITICISM OF MOBUTU FROM ZAIRIANS RANGING FROM MAN-IN-STREET TO HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. ALL CRTITICS HAVE SOMETHING TO LOSE AS RESULT OF 30 DECEMBER MEASURES -- CHILDREN THEY MUST BRING BACK FROM ABROAD, BUSINESSES THEY MUST TURN OVER TO STATE, INFLUENCE, ETC. -- BUT WE ARE NONETHELESS STRUCK BY CONSISTENCY OF MESSAGE.

2. SUMMARY OF CRTICISM RUNS LIKE THIS: MOBUTU HAS GONE OFF DEEP END. HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY CONCOCTED "RADICALIZATION" PROGRAM, BUT HASN'T A CLUE AS TO HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT, NOR ANY UNDERSTANDING OF COSTS INVOLVED. WORSE, MOBUTU LISTENS TO NO ONE, ACCEPTS NO CRTICAL ADVICE AND IS SIMPLY BENT ON EXTENDING HIS OWN POWER, SAVING HIS OWN SKIN -- OR BOTH. IN MEANTIME, ECONOMY IS GOING TO HELL IN HANDBASKET, OPPOSITION IS SPRINGING UP, AND
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MOBUTU SEEMS BOUND TO LEAVE COUNTRY IN WORSE SHAPE THAN

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IT WAS BEFORE HE TOOK OVER TEN YEARS AGO.

3. SECOND PART OF MESSAGE IS EQUALLY STRONG: MOBUTU WILL LISTEN ONLY TO AMERICANS. USG MUST GET TO HIM AND MAKE HIM SEE REASON. (LATEST AND MOST NOTABLE PROPONENT THIS LINE WAS KEY GOZ OFFICIAL IN ECONOMIC/FINANCE AREA. HE MADE PLEA TO AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN.)

4. FOREGOING IS REPORTED TO GIVE DEPARTMENT A FEEL FOR ONE UNDERCURRENT IN LOCAL SITUATION. WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS REPORTED INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS, OR MENTIONED SOURCES, SIMPLY BECAUSE ZAIRIANS INVOLVED COULD COME TO GRIEF IF WORD GOT OUT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE HAVE RESPONDED TO APPEAL BY POINTING OUT THAT USG DOES NOT CONTROL MOBUTU'S OR GOZ POLICY AND THAT WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF TELLING MOBUTU WHAT HE MUST DO.

5. NONE OF THE FOREGOING ALTERS OUR VIEW THAT MOBUTU'S REGIME IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL (REFTEL). HOWEVER, EXPRESSIONS OF DISTRESS OR FEAR AMONG MANY HITERTO PRIVILEGED ZAIRIANS HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY OPEN AND THE CONTAGION COULD SPREAD. MOREVOVER, WE HAVE HAD MANY REPORTS OF WILD RUMORS, E.G., " MOBUTU PLANS TAKE OUR CHILDREN FROM US A LA CHINA" WHICH IS CIRCULATING IN LIMETE (SLUMS OF KIN-SHASA INHABITED BY POORER AFRICANS). MANY EMBASSIES HAVE HEARD RUMORS AND APPEALS TO "DO SOMETHING" BUT OUR REPUTATION AS SPECIAL FRIENDTO MOBUTU HAS PROBABLY EARNED US MOST OF THE APPEALS -- SOME DIRECT, SOME IMPLIED -- FOR INTERCESSION. ON OTHER HAND, SOMEONE IS POISONING WELL, WITNESS STORIES IN SPECIAL (KINSHASA'S A-23)JEUNE AFRIQUE (PRIS 2853) AND ELIMA TODAY (SEPTEL) AS WELL AS CANARD CIRCULATING HERE THAT US WAS INVOLVED WITH EKETEBI IN PLANNING A COUP. EMBASSY MAY BE UNDER SURVEILLANCE AND FOREIGNMINISTRY IS BUSY RESTRICTING STILL FURTHER LONG-LIMITED OFFICIAL USG CONTACTS AND PLANNING IMPOSE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. IT IS NOT THAT WE ARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, RATHER OUR PREVIOUSLY PRIVILEGED POSITION IS ERODING. WE UNDERSTAND KINSHASA IS NOW ONLY POINT OF ENTRY INTO ZAIRE, I.E., FRONTIERS ARE CLOSED.
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IN ADDITION, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, STRICT VISA CONTROL IS IN EFFECT. WHILE OUR MTAT TEAM IS TRAVELLING IN INTERIOR AT LAST MOMENT ITINERARY WAS CHANGED TO ELIMINATE TWO STOPS IN KIV WHERE THERE IS, OF COURSE, A LEAST SOME REBEL ACTIVITY.

6. THIS PATTERN INDICATES REGIME EITHER BELIEVES THERE IS REAL THREAT OR THAT IT IS SOMEHOW IN GOZ'S INTEREST TO

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BEHAVE AS IF THREAT WERE REAL. AS INDICATED ABOVE, WE THINK MOBUTU IS IN FIRM CONTROL BUT WE KNOW CRITICAL COMMENT (ALTHOUGH MUFFLED) IS AT HIGHEST PITCH IN RECENT YEARS AND THAT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS OSTENSIBLY TO CONTROL SITUATION ARE INCREASING SENSE OF TENSION.
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